

**PRESS RELEASE**

July 26, 2021 - for immediate release:

**First online, practical dairy training series in Sri Lanka successfully completed**

**Nearly 120 professionals trained in sustainable feed and waste management**

Close to 120 dairy farmers, farm managers, extension officers and other professionals in the fast-developing dairy sector in Sri Lanka have successfully completed a training course in sustainable feed and waste management. Of the 6 planned training sessions, 2 were conducted fully online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the first time this kind of training session for the dairy industry took place in Sri Lanka.

The bespoke training with focus on practical, hands-on skills, was commissioned by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka with financial support from Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO; Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland). It was conducted by a Dutch consortium of HollandDoor, Wageningen Livestock Research and Wellantcollege, in close collaboration with local partners such as All Island Dairy Association (AIDA) and University of Peradeniya.

The training was offered to a selected group of dairy professionals who wanted to improve their knowledge and hands-on practical skills on feed and waste management. Between February and May 2021, all participants followed the online courses and carried out exercises offline in between. During the inauguration, Dutch Ambassador in Sri Lanka Her Excellency Tanja Gonggrijp stressed the fact that exchange and learning is the way forward for Sri Lanka to achieve the ambitious goal of being self-sufficient in dairy.

Every week, the trainers spent several hours online with the participants to work on nutrition and feeding, the lactation cycle, cow signals and sustainable waste management. The trainees made their own feed plan and learned to assess their cows, and the business aspects of farming.

A highlight of the course was a practical session, in which participants from Sri Lanka logged in online and assessed a Dutch farm and cows through a video connection. At the final meeting, all participants presented their action plans for farm improvement to a mix of Dutch and Sri Lankan assessors.

Online training of practical skills certainly can be challenging at times, however this training has proved that it is certainly possible and effective! The following comments from one of our participants sums it up adequately:

*“I was excited to be part of this training programme. Though I am not an academic, I tried to keep up with others. It was very interesting and lots of learning. Thank you Netherlands and AIDA and other institutions for organizing the training programme. A special thanks to the trainers that made the training informative and interactive. The practical sessions were awesome. “*

Companies interested in this program are invited to contact:  
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\*\*\*\*\* END OF PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

*Editorial notes (not for publication)*

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